Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-7, 10, 13, 15-19, 21-28, and 30, and amend claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 29, and 31, as indicated below.

1-7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1~~1~~2, further comprising decrypting the packet prior to examining the packet.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1~~1~~2 wherein said examining the packet includes examining XML root and node elements of the packet to identify content that can be matched to ~~said~~ specific ones of said rules.

10.   (Cancelled)

11.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1~~1~~2 wherein said particular routing action includes at least one of performing a delayed binding operation and buffering packets until information for load balancing is received, load balancing multiple XML applications, differentiating service of packets based on their XML-related content, and prioritizing transactions based on XML-related content of packets.

12.   (Currently Amended) <u>A method, comprising:</u>
<u>examining a packet to determine if the packet contains extensible markup language (XML)-related content;</u>
<u>if XML-related content is determined to be contained in said packet, matching the XML-related content to a rule;</u> ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~
examining the packet to identify non-XML-related content;

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if non-XML-related content is determined to be contained in said packet, matching the non-XML-related content to a rule ~~corresponding other ones of said rules~~; and

determining ~~the~~ a particular routing action to undertake based on the rules corresponding to the XML-related content and to the non-XML-related content.

13-28. (Cancelled)

29.　(Currently Amended)　The apparatus of claim ~~28~~ 31, further comprising a decryption device to decrypt said XML-related content~~, which was encrypted,~~ contained in the packet.

30.　(Cancelled)

31.　(Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:

a processor;

a first element under control of the processor to examine a packet to determine if the packet contains extensible markup language (XML)-related content;

a second element under control by the processor to match the XML-related content determined to be contained in said packet to at least one rule associated with the XML-related content;

a data structure accessible by the processor to store said at least one rule associated with the XML-related content;

a third element under control by the processor determine a particular routing action to perform on the packet;

~~The apparatus of claim 30~~ wherein the data structure further stores rules, ~~from said set,~~ that are associated with non-XML-related content, the first element being capable to examine the packet for the non-XML-related content, the second element being capable to match the non-XML-related content of the packet to at least one ~~corresponding~~ said rule associated with the non-XML-related content, the third element

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being capable to determine the particular routing action based on said ~~an evaluation bit masks that correspond to~~ rules associated with the XML-related content and associated with the non-XML-related content that are present in the packet.